

**AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:**

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1.-4. Canceled.

5. (Currently Amended) A method for analyzing divalent cations by ion chromatography employing a cation exchange column, ~~comprising~~consisting of the successive steps of

(a) eluting the cation exchange column with an eluent comprising an acid and at least one amino acid selected from the group consisting of histidine, lysine and arginine,

(b) detecting cations eluted from the column upon supplying the eluent, and

(c) preparing a chromatogram.

6. (Currently Amended) A method for analyzing alkaline earth metal ions by ion chromatography, ~~comprising~~consisting of the successive steps of

(a) eluting a cation exchange column with an eluent which comprises an acid and at least one amino acid selected from the group consisting of histidine, lysine and arginine

(b) detecting cations eluted from the column upon supplying the eluent, and

(c) preparing a chromatogram.

7. (Currently Amended) A method for analyzing alkaline earth metal ions by ion chromatography, ~~comprising~~consisting of the successive steps of

(a) eluting a cation exchange column with an eluent which comprises an acid selected from the group consisting of nitric acid, sulfuric acid, phosphoric acid, methanesulfonic acid, oxalic acid, tartaric acid, benzoic acid and phthalic acid and at least one amino acid selected from the group consisting of histidine, lysine and arginine,

(b) detecting cations eluted from the column upon supplying the eluent, and

(c) preparing a chromatogram.

8. (Currently Amended) A method for analyzing alkaline earth metal ions by ion chromatography, ~~comprising~~consisting of the successive steps of

(a) eluting a cation exchange column with an eluent which consists essentially of an acid selected from the group consisting of nitric acid, sulfuric acid, phosphoric acid, methanesulfonic acid, oxalic acid, tartaric acid, benzoic acid and phthalic acid and at least one amino acid selected from the group consisting of histidine, lysine and arginine,

(b) detecting cations eluted from the column upon supplying the eluent, and

(c) preparing a chromatogram.